

the PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL

The circulation leader among independent publications in the Presbyterian-Reformed world

This is the Wisdom of God

A Christian is one that believes things his reason cannot comprehend, and hopes for things which neither he nor any man alive ever saw.

He believes Three to be One, and One to be Three; a Father not older than His Son, and the Son equal with His Father.

He believes himself to be precious in God's sight, and yet loathes himself in his own. He dares not justify himself even in those things wherein he can find no fault with himself, and yet believes that God accepts him in those services wherein he is able to find many faults.

He is so ashamed that he dares not open his mouth before the Lord yet comes with boldness to God and asks Him anything he needs.

He has within him both flesh and spirit, and yet he is not a doubleminded man; he often is led captive by the law of sin, yet it never gets dominion over him.

He cannot sin, yet can do nothing without sin.

He is so humble as to acknowledge himself to deserve nothing but evil, and yet he believes that God means him all good.

—Lord Bacon

S. S. LESSON AND YOUTH PROGRAM FOR SEPTEMBER 28

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MAILBAG

WHY THERE'S NO AGREEMENT

I am not accustomed to reading your paper and was unprepared for the venom in the article "007 Rides Again" which appeared in your August 27 issue.

What different impressions two

people can carry away from the same conference! I was fortunate enough to attend portions of the World Missions and National Ministries conferences and was deeply moved by the spirit of Christian love which permeated both.

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THE PRESBYTERIAN JOURNAL, a Presbyterian weekly magazine, devoted to the statement, defense, and propagation of the Gospel, the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints, published every Wednesday by the Southern Presbyterian Journal Co., Inc., in Weaverville, N. C.

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: \$4 a year for individuals, \$3 for members of Every Family Plan churches. All correspondence regarding subscriptions, advertising or other business matters, should be addressed to the business

office in Weaverville, N. C. 28787. Second class postage paid at Weaverville, N. C. 28787.

NEWS AND EDITORIAL correspondence should be addressed to P. O. Box 3108, Asheville, N. C. 28802. Editorial offices located at 247 Charlotte St.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS notices should be addressed to the business office, Weaverville, N. C. 28787, allowing three weeks for change in the continental U. S. Change notices should include both old and new addresses.

The sincere yearning for reconciliation voiced by the leaders and echoed in the response of the participants; their openness to all persons and their willingness to establish lines of communication with the alienated, whoever they are and wherever they are found; and their commitment to Christ and His costly discipleship are strong impressions which will be an abiding inspiration to me.

There were aspects of the services that were more meaningful to some of my younger friends than they were to me; and there were other innovations which opened up to me facets of worship which deepened the experience profoundly. I am grateful that at Montreat there is still the freedom to try new forms so that we may keep what is meaningful and discard what is not.

—Mrs. Hugh D. Verner
Charlotte, N. C.

This letter is important because it shows how sincerely one can confuse evil with good and not realize the difference.—Ed.

THE TIME IS RIPE

Once again, after reading the August 27 *Journal*, I am left heart broken at the happenings that are taking place in our Church (PCUS) and others. I am wondering if there is an agency of our Church that merits our support — one that will not take the money given for the glory of God and turn it over to the devil for his use.

I feel that those who are advocating revolution and overthrow of government should be exposed and placed in their proper place before we do experience the dreadful situation of revolution.

We who are faithful to the Church's constitution are cut off and out-manuevered in every situation. Sometimes even within the presbyteries and the local congregation. Why is the Bible down-rated by leaders of the Church? Why is the confession of faith brought up for change? Why do we have to vote on church union over and over again? Will one-world Church solve the problems that confront us any better than two or three Churches? It almost seems that there are some who would have us believe that it is evil to serve the Lord.

I am determined, by the power and grace of God, that come what may in the Church, I will stand as

it to be a non-Christian declaration.

If we are then to be followers of Christ and act in His love, how can we support a movement that would take away from the souls committed to our care many of the essential truths of the Lord of salvation and eternal life?

We believe Christ's first concern is for the people who would be taught by the Church and hear the Word of God proclaimed. We also would say we are not unmindful of our many shortcomings in expressing our discipleship in terms of social concern. But to whomsoever we are sent, as God opens the way, we are charged with sharing the fulness of God's revelation of Himself in Christ. We see the present position of the UPUSA to be a retreat from that.

I also believe that an important element is missing from both Dr. Sweazey's call for unity in Christ and from Dr. Lynn's plea for the achievement of unity in love. In regard to the first, where does the Church look for the revelation of Christ? We cannot each determine for ourselves who Christ is and what He commands and thereby find unity.

We would only be projecting our own ideas of what is right, with confusion the only possible result.

Ultimately that becomes idolatry, no longer Christian faith. Let Dr. Sweazey and our own leaders call us to the *Biblical* revelation of Christ. The only Christ we can know and follow in unity is He of whom we are taught in the Bible.

Not by Might

When we consider the much needed quality of love, it becomes immediately apparent that such a virtue cannot be obtained or practiced by our wills alone.

It would be wonderfully easy to say that love is the way and each of us can practice love if we would. But Paul wrote of it as a gift from God the Holy Spirit. Would that Dr. Lynn and others would keep before us that where love is lacking we need to consider the nature of our relationship to God in Christ Jesus and turn to Him in confession and faith.

There are many of us who are opposed to what we believe the plan of union will bring forth and yet

who do long for some way in which a fuller expression of the unity we profess in Christ and the witness to Christ's saving power and Lordship in all areas of life may be realized. Perhaps it is unfair to judge the plan before it has been written and unveiled. However, it must be stated now that unless there is first within both present denominations a renewal of commitment to Jesus Christ in terms of His Biblical revelation — which we have professed to see best expressed by the Reformed confessions, such as our Westminster Confession — active opposition must be called for. Pastoral concern for those under our care would demand it.

A responsible opportunity has been laid before all of us by the action of the two General Assemblies. We should challenge the two moderators and the appointed Committee to call for and set forth a plan offering a true Reformed and Presbyterian Church, one that could lead the world because it would be built on the eternal foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This we would joyfully cheer and support. ☐

The Plan of Government states the purpose of the seminary —

May Columbia's Catalog Conform!

WILLIAM C. ROBINSON

Purpose gives poise and direction to life, whether it be the life of an individual or that of an institution. At the 1969 Commencement exercises of Columbia Theological Seminary, the speaker, executive director of the Fund for Theological Education, wisely noted that the catalog contained no statement of the purpose of the institution.

In reply the validity of the criticism was acknowledged, and the speaker was thanked for the added stimulus given by his remarks. The

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faculty is reportedly working on and revising a statement to appear in the next catalog.

Now only a purpose that harvests the past into the granary of the present can furnish the bread of hope for the future. In the Columbia of yesterday is kindled the spark for the Columbia of tomorrow. The early records of the seminary show that the founding fathers established this institution to "light up another sun which shall throw further West the light of the Gospel."

There is a very definite statement of purpose in the *Plan of Government*. It appears (I.3) thus:

"The great purpose of the seminary shall be to prepare men for the Gospel ministry, to train Christian

workers, to protect the standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, to contend for the faith, and to labor for the Kingdom of God."

In the furtherance of this, each director promises, "that I will faithfully endeavor to carry into effect all its provisions, and to promote the great purpose of the seminary" (Plan, II.2).

On the basis of this avowed purpose, God has graciously brought the institution to her present plenty and prosperity. The way to increased strength and usefulness does not lie in overlooking the foundation on which her appeal has been made and for which her assets have come.

Moreover, under the *Plan* (II.9),

the president and professors subscribe to the Confession of Faith, Catechisms and other standards of the Presbyterian Church and "promise and engage not to teach, directly or indirectly, any doctrine contrary to the Scriptures as interpreted in these standards."

Thus, a statement of purpose, now being prepared for the next catalog may be expected to accord with that of the *Plan of Government*, perhaps supplementing it to

face current needs.

A "Prayer for Freedom" produced by one of the professors was sung at the baccalaureate service. One line of this is,

"Free from other worldly creeds."

We pray that this may not prove the prelude for setting aside the standards of our Church!

The heart of our Westminster creed is the personal encounter of our Lord Jesus Christ with us sinners. Therein the Spirit works faith

in us and unites us to Christ in our effectual calling, and "we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered to us in the Gospel." Other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

For our fathers, as for ourselves, Christ is our righteousness. May this faith continue to be the torch beckoning the oncoming generations toward the new heavens and new earth in which dwell righteousness!

Why has "military" become a dirty word? —

In Defense of the Defenders

RAYMOND VAN HEUKELOM

It is difficult not to respond emotionally to the grossly unjust and unkind judgments one hears of the military institution and, by extension, of men in the military.

As the left attacks the military structure unfairly the right reacts and makes it not merely the defender of our land against external aggression but of our morals against deterioration. Neither view is realistic.

The bias of the writer of these lines will be clear enough in what is written. But to help prevent distortion of that bias permit us to say that it is not 26 years in the United States Army Reserves which created that bias. Rather, it was precisely because we loved our country for its freedom and lack of imperialism and militarism on the one hand and saw the dangers to this heritage on the other that we have continued this relationship to the military structure.

The best antidote to the threat to freedom and morals is the Christian faith which we proclaim without apology within the military system. Would that it received as wide a hearing in civilian circles.

In the past two weeks we were

privileged once again to meet many officers, including several generals with whom we spent a number of hours. They were National Guard, Reserve, and Regular Army with a few Navy and Air Force persons.

One thing marked everyone. They hated war. They want to get out of Vietnam though not at the cost of the Vietnamese people. They were eloquent and passionate in their requests that we pray and work for peace.

Not a Personal Matter

Nor was their desire motivated by personal considerations. True, some were good for a second tour of duty in Vietnam. But no good soldier complains about difficult duty. Rather, they were concerned about bloodshed, character deterioration among citizens as well as soldiers, and a strained economy.

The poor are not helped, schools are not built, depressed city areas are not renewed, because our monetary strength is spent too largely in conflict. These men of honor were as concerned about these matters as any other citizen.

The military did not choose Vietnam. Our civil rulers did. Nor do they determine the number of men and the quantities of materiel needed for the task. The Vietcong and Hanoi do that.

It is as ridiculous to expect the

military to do an assigned task if the civil government denies the necessary means as to fault our few missionaries in Japan for that country's continued pagan character.

How can one demand of our government that it bring our troops home but that it preserve free people from Communist control? Civil and military leaders are seeking to achieve both ends, and disagreement about the method is inevitable. Negative judgments on motives are unworthy of an American citizen.

We should remember that the New Testament has no disparaging word for the professional soldier. In our time as then he serves with considerable sacrifice. Anyone with the character and ability required for promotion in enlisted or officer ranks would receive larger remuneration in civilian life.

At the lower end, where the vast majority of our young men serve for periods varying from six months to four years, tangible rewards are minor indeed. Let them have at least the respect and understanding they deserve. Anything less is unworthy of Christians and the Church. ☩

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Not only do we know through Jesus Christ alone, but we do not even know ourselves except through Jesus Christ. Apart from Jesus Christ we know not what is our life, or our death, or God, or what we ourselves are. — BLAISE PASCAL.

The author is pastor of the First Reformed Church, Orange City, Iowa. This first appeared in THE CHURCH HERALD as an editorial.